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*The Duty and Reward of turning Others
to Righteousness.*

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A
SERMON

Preached to the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

AT

St. Mary-le-Bow,

ON

Monday, January 19th, 1735.

By **EDWARD COBDEN, D.D.**
Rector of St. *Austin's*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
His Majesty.

L O N D O N,
Printed for M. DOWNING, in *Bartholomew-Close,*
near West-Smithfield. 1736.

The Duty and Reward of Living Obedient
to Righteousness

SERMON

Preached to the

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners

AT

St. Mary's-Bow

ON

Monday, January 15th 1785

By EDWARD CORDELL, D.D.

Rector of St. Mary's, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
His Majesty, George the Third.

LONDON

Printed for M. D. Wilson, in Strand, near
St. Martin's Church, 1785.



DANIEL XII. 3.

*They that be Wise, shall shine as the
Brightness of the Firmament: and
they that turn many to Righteousness,
as the Stars for ever and ever.*



WHETHER these Words, with
the Context, relate to any par-
ticular Temporal Deliverance
of the Jews, I need not give
either my self, or You, the
trouble of a nice Enquiry.
Since if they do, they may be allow'd too, to
contain a Prophecy of the general Resurrection,
and of the Rewards and Punishments of a Fu-
ture State; and that one of the clearest in the
Old Testament, especially when our Blessed
Saviour is supposed so to have applied them.
*Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun
in the Kingdom of the Father, Matt. xiii. 43.*
And the Expressions themselves, of awaking
out of the Dust of the Earth, to everlasting Life,

4 *A SERMON before the Societies*

or to everlasting Shame and Contempt, and of ~~shining for ever and ever~~, are so agreeable to this Construction, that they cannot be fully answered by any other.

IN my Discourse upon this Subject, I shall endeavour to represent to You,

First, Some of the *Ways* of turning others to Righteousness.

Secondly, The Obligations, and

Thirdly, The Encouragements we have to pursue them.

THE *first* Method I shall mention of turning others to Righteousness, is *Instruction*.

WHEN we see a well-disposed Brother wandering out of the Way that leads to Bliss, for want of sufficient Knowledge to direct him in it; then, kindly to explain and confirm to him the Doctrine of a crucify'd Saviour, and all the excellent Precepts of our Holy Religion; this is *turning him to Righteousness, and bringing him to Light and Immortality through the Gospel*.

THUS St. Paul, when he beheld the *Athenians* paying their blind Devotion to the unknown GOD, discovered to them that immense Power, which they ignorantly Worshipp'd; taught them the Knowledge of the CREATOR,

in whom they liv'd, and mov'd, and had their Being; and Faith in a REDEEMER, who was ordain'd to judge the World in Righteousness, whereof there was assurance given to all Men, in that he was rais'd from the Dead.

NEXT to the Charity of Informing the Ignorant, is that of Resolving the Doubtful. To be in Doubt and Suspense even about Things of no great Importance, is a very troublesome and uneasy State of Mind; much more when it concerns our Souls, and relates to the weighty Affairs of another Life. And when we are at a loss which way to turn, amidst the various Paths of Error, we should look on him as some Guardian Angel sent from Heaven, that should relieve us under our Distress, and give us sure Directions to the Place we would arrive at.

WHEN Men's Doubts are cleared, and their Understandings enlightned, the next Step is to warm their Affections, and encourage them in the great Work of Salvation. When they grow faint and weary in their Duty, when the Allurements of Pleasure would draw, or the Prospect of Danger affright them into Disobedience, then to fortify their Spirits, and animate their Virtue, by representing to them the great Advantages of a Holy and Religious Life, with what Pleasure it entertains all the Way, with what exceeding Rewards it crowns us in the End.

To

6 A SERMON before the Societies

To Exhortation it will be sometimes necessary to add *Reproof*. Which is a Task that ought to be very nicely and tenderly managed, and requires a great Share of Prudence, Piety, and Goodness, to render it successful. But whenever there is a Prospect of doing Good by it, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer Sin to lie upon him*, Lev. xix. 17. Then neither Fear nor Favour ought to discourage us, since to convert a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, is to save a Soul from Death, Jam. v. 20. When we undertake this difficult Office, we should endeavour to imitate the Piety and Discretion of *Nathan*, in the Case of *David*, (2 Sam. xii.) then too those, who like *David*, are admonisht of their Guilt, will in all likelihood copy after his *Repentance*.

AND wheresoever the Providence of God has entrusted us with any lawful Power and Authority over others, that Power and Authority it imports us to make use of for the Advancement of his Honour and Glory. There may be some Difficulty perhaps in prescribing exactly the *Extent* of this Power, and how far it ought to be made use of, even for such great and glorious Ends. But that it ought in some degree to be exercised, with impartial Judges can admit of no Dispute; and to suppose the contrary would open a Passage to all *Iniquity* and *Licentiousness*. Severity is certainly to be avoided in Matters of mere Speculation, nor
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are People to be punisht only for Thinking wrong, provided they sit down quietly in the Enjoyment of their own Opinions. But they may be invited, perswaded, and encouraged to embrace the true Religion; Publick Ministers may be appointed to instruct them in, and persuade them to it, and its Publick Worship may and ought to be supported by Civil Sanctions.

I SHALL mention but one Method more of turning others to Righteousness; without which, the rest will be languid, and less effectual, and that is the Light and Influence of a *Good Example*. And when this is join'd with the other, it is not easy to be withstood. For this shews us to be in earnest; and that we do not lay Mankind under unnecessary Restraints, and such as we our selves think not fit to submit to. There is in Human Nature, a strong Inclination to imitate, and ere we are aware, nay sometimes, almost against our Wills, we are led by Example. And 'tis incredible, what Power and Influence the Lustre of religious Patterns, especially if placed in any Eminence, hath on those about them. When their *Light shines* with such advantage *before Men*, they cannot but *see and observe* their *good Works*, and *glorify their Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. v. 16.

THUS I have briefly laid before You some of the Ways of *turning others to Righteousness*. That these, and whatever else our own Thoughts

8 *A SERMON before the Societies*

Thoughts shall suggest to us, we are upon all proper Occasions to make use of,

Secondly, We shall find our selves strongly obliged, whether we consider our selves as *Men* or *Christians*, both from the Law of Nature, and that of the Gospel.

THE Light of Reason tell us, that we are not born for our selves alone, but that our Inclinations prompt us, our Talents fit us, as well as Interests invite us, to promote the Benefit and Advantage of our Brethren*. Upon which account, Man alone, of all the Creatures of this Lower World, is endow'd with the Gift and Privilege of Speech, that He may improve by mutual Conversation, and communicate to others what Discoveries he makes in all his rational Enquiries. Hence we find the wisest of the Heathens very earnest in the Pursuit of Truth, and diligent in the Practice of Virtue, not only on their *own* Account; but industrious to discover the One, and recommend the Other to the *rest* of Mankind. It is a noted Saying, quoted by *Tully*, "The Man that kindly directs another in the Way, kindles another's Candle with his own, without losing the least Benefit of his own Light." Hence have they communicated to the World many

* Specimen Natura capi debeat ex optima quâq; Natura: Quæ est igitur melior in hominum genere Natura, quam eorum, qui se Natos ad homines juvandos, tutandos, conservandos, arbitrantur? CICERO.

many excellent Treatises of Morality and Philosophy. And indeed, they carried both the Speculation and the Practice to so noble a pitch, as may be for the Instruction and Reproach of many Christians.

AND if the Heathens, who had but confus'd and unsettled Notions of Truth, and such faint and imperfect Glimpses of a Future State, if *they* thought themselves obliged to promote the Interests of Truth and Virtue, and to engage others to embrace and pursue them, much greater Obligation have *we* as Christians. In the Gospel, we have a much greater Assurance of Success in these our Charitable Endeavours, inasmuch as we have a clearer view of Truth, than any other Dispensation can pretend. The Importance and Excellence of this Charity is there display'd to us in such amiable and lively Colours, as is sufficient to excite our utmost Diligence in so noble an Employ: the Value and Dignity of our Souls, the Objects of it, is fully discovered; and that Life and Immortality, for which they are design'd, is perfectly freed from Shades and Darkness, and brought to the clearest and most convincing Light.

THIS indeed is the main Scheme and Design of the Gospel, which is a Doctrine of the sublimest Charity, and a happy Method of saving Souls. For this it was, that our Blessed Saviour liv'd and convers'd among us, and went about Preaching his heavenly Doctrine, and reclaiming Men every where from the

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Paths

10 *A SERMON before the Societies*

Paths of Sin and Folly. For this it was that he sent out his Evangelists and Apostles, diffusing the glad Tidings of Peace and Salvation thro' all the World.

AND as the Gospel is full of Patterns, so is it of Precepts to this Purpose. There we are required to be holy in all manner of Conversation our selves, not on our own Account alone, but also for the sake of those we converse with. There we are commanded not to put our *Candle under a Bushel*, but to place it where it may be of Use and Direction to the rest of Mankind.

So that, if we would either follow the *Example*, or obey the *Precepts* of our Blessed Redeemer, without which, we shall have but an empty Claim to Christianity, this great Work of reducing others to Piety and Goodness, is what all of us should be diligent and incessant in.

BUT notwithstanding, we are all obliged to bring others to the Light of Truth, and the Practice of Goodness, as we are *Christians* in general; yet some Persons, from their *Relation* and *Office*, are more especially concerned in this Duty, such as Parents, Magistrates, and Pastors.

PARENTS are, by the Law of Nature and Revelation, to train up their Children and Families in the Paths of Piety and Virtue. For

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if he that provides not for his own, with regard to *Temporals*, is *worse than an Infidel*: what Stupidity do they discover, who make no Provision for the *Spiritual* and better Part of those, who are by Nature and Providence committed to their Care? They ought certainly to instill good Principles into their Minds, and to command their Children and Servants, *that they keep the Way of the Lord*. To this End, they should at stated Times, summon them every Day to Family Prayer, and take care that the Bible, and other good Books be frequently read among them: They ought to make them observe the Rules and Seasons of Publick Worship, and pay a religious Regard to that Day, which is more especially consecrated to Piety and Devotion.

MAGISTRATES likewise, who derive their Power originally from Heaven, ought to Employ it in promoting the Honour of their Maker. They are *Ministers of God for Good*, and ought to exert what Authority they are invested with, for the Suppression of Immorality and Profaneness, and for the Advancing and Encouraging whatever tends to Soundness of Faith and Purity of Manners. They should be so far from being remiss in this important Trust, and caring *for none of these Things*, that they should be perpetually mindful of His Interest, whose Substitutes they are, and *attending continually on this very Thing*. For this they have the Examples of all wise and religious Governors, who have gone before them:

12 *A SERMON before the Societies*

and as strong and undoubted Obligations as either Reason or Revelation can lay upon them. To this therefore, they will have a constant Regard, remembering themselves to be but Stewards, entrusted with a Talent, for which they must one Day render to their great Lord, a very strict Account. And 'tis with Gratitude and Pleasure we reflect, that our PRESENT PRINCES esteem it the Glory of their REIGN, to be the DEFENDERS OF OUR FAITH; and have given the fullest Assurances, that they will Protect and Support that CHURCH, which is the *Strength* and *Honour* of the Reformation, and the most perfect Model of primitive and genuine Christianity this Day in the World.

AND that this is a Duty more especially incumbent on the Clergy, there is no occasion of many Arguments to demonstrate. This is a Business, to which we are immediately call'd and set apart. We are to study and explain that inexhaustible Treasury of Divine Knowledge, the Holy Scriptures, and apply it upon all Occasions, to the several Exigencies of those we have in charge. We are to admonish with all Patience, and Rebuke with all Boldness; and by an exemplary Life and Conversation, lead People to that immortal Happiness, to which our Doctrines would direct them. We should use all our Arts, and improve all our Faculties, and lay out all our Gifts and Graces to this glorious End and Purpose. By the Wisdom of Serpents, and the Innocency of Doves, endeavour
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to bring as many as possible to the Profession of a true Faith, and the Practice of a sincere Gospel Obedience,

AMONG such as *turn others to Righteousness*, may justly be reckon'd those who write Treatises of Morality and Religion, and recommend Piety from the Press. For altho', the instilling wholesome Instructions *in Person*, and *vivâ voce*, hath in some respects the Advantage, as that they are inspir'd with more *Life* and *Vigour*, and operate more powerfully and effectually for the *present*: yet has the writing good Books the Advantage in many others: As that they spread the Benefit much *farther* and *wider*, and propagate it even to future Generations. Hence is it, that many *being Dead, yet speak*; and we may now travel to Heaven by the Assistance of those who have gone thither many Ages since. And such an Author as that of the *Whole Duty of Man*, tho' at present he may escape the Notice of Mankind, yet will hereafter shine out with distinguished Lustre. The Fountain, like that of the *Nile*, lies conceal'd, while it enriches the Land with the Streams of Knowledge, and will in all likelihood, continue to do so, till Time shall be no more.

THOSE likewise, whom Providence hath blest with Wealth and Plenty, have it in their Power to promote Virtue and Religion, in a very extensive Manner, and beyond their own Sphere

14 *A SERMON before the Societies*

Sphere of Action. By purchasing and dispersing *good Books*, and by enabling the poorer *Clergy* the better to discharge their Duty, by Augmenting the smaller Livings; or by encouraging *Schools* for the Education of Youth, by Assisting the *Societies* for the *Propagation of the Gospel*, the *Promoting Christian Knowledge*, and, what I would at present recommend, the *Reformation of Manners*. And may those pious and generous Souls, be for ever mentioned with Respect, who have contrived and laid the Foundations of so many excellent Methods of Charity among us; wherein every well-disposed Christian may be sure of disposing his Bounty, to the greatest Advantage in promoting the Glory of God, and the eternal Happiness of our Brethren. And far be it from me to attempt to discourage any of them; or to endeavour to raise the Credit of *one*, by lessening and depreting *another*. Yet surely, if it be highly commendable to spread the *Knowledge* of Christianity, in those dark Corners of the World, where the Sound of the Gospel has not been yet heard; is it not likewise so to promote the *Practice* of it in our own Nation, and by that to convince them, that the Blessing we offer is well worth their Acceptance, by shewing the happy Fruits of it, where it is already Planted? especially when this too is the most likely Means of securing the Continuance of it, and to prevent our Candlestick being removed from us, for our walking unworthy the Light that is spread

spread around us. If it be a noble and excellent Charity, to provide for the Virtue of the *coming Age*, by an early Education of our Youth in the Principles of Religion; can it be thought otherwise, to endeavour to prevent the Vices and Corruptions of the *present Generation*? which unless they are prevented, 'tis to be fear'd, what Education you can give the others will be of less service. The *bad Examples* they continually see, will abate the Influence of the *good Instructions* they receive. When such is the *Parents Folly*, 'tis highly probable, that *Posterity will Praise their Saying*, and too fatally copy after their Pattern. The great Degeneracy and Corruption of the Times, has been the Complaint of good Men in all Ages; and *Solomon* has forbid our asserting, that the present exceed all that ever went before us. Yet surely, under the Light of so excellent a Religion, and the Enjoyment of such extraordinary Means of Grace, it is hardly possible to conceive how Profaneness and Immorality of all kinds can rise to a greater pitch. And if some Check be not put to this overflowing of Ungodliness, we shall be soon ripe for Vengeance, and may justly expect to be all swallowed up by some general Destruction. The natural Consequence of our Vices, will bring this upon us, tho' we should not be visited by any signal Castigation from Heaven. If *Xerxes* wept with a generous Concern, at the View of his numerous Army, to think, how few of them would survive in a little time; what Heart but must melt with Compassion,

16 *A SERMON before the Societies*

to reflect what large Numbers of this populous City are destroying themselves by their own Vices, and running headlong to eternal Ruin*? The Sins of the Nation is a Subject one cannot mention without Reluctance, and 'tis much more agreeable to draw a Veil over them, and lament them in secret. But alas! as they are too numerous to be describ'd, so are they too notorious to be conceal'd. Atheism and Infidelity, and a ridiculing all Revelation, are not only secretly entertain'd, but publickly avow'd and maintain'd among us. The Fool in our Days, hath not only said in his *Heart, there is no God*, no Redeemer, but *openly and loudly* proclaim'd it. And from such monstrous Tenets industriously propagated, it is, that such daring Villanies as House-breaking, Robberies, Murders, are risen to such an height of Insolence, and that the most horrid Purjuries, to elude the Sentence due to them, are so frequent. For when Men have got rid of the Fear of God, and the Checks of Conscience, what is there to restrain them? Human Laws cannot, which may be often violated without Discovery, and easily evaded by Art and Falshood. A Contempt of all Rule and Order, a Defamation of Governors, and a bare-faced Insult upon Government, seem to pave the Way for a general Licentiousness; and the Notions of absolute and unbounded Liberty, which some are
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* Nunquid in te sunt viscera Pietatis, qui plangis corpus à quo recessit anima, & non plangis animam à quâ recessit Deus? *St. BERNARD.*

so fond of, directly tend to lay level all the Fences of Property.

PROFANE *Cursing* and *Swearing*, is now become the common Language of the Streets, in both Sexes, and among all Degrees of Men: to which there being no possible Temptation, one would think People used it only to shew how wicked they dare be, and to defy the Divine Displeasure. To these frequent Oaths in common Conversation, it is likewise owing, that they are so little regarded on solemn Occasions in our Courts of Judicature, of which we have lately had such notorious Instances; and it were heartily to be wish'd, that some Method might be found out, to put an effectual Stop to them; or at least, to the Practice of those wicked Agents, who suborn Evidence, and hire *Sons of Belial* for Perjury. Appeals to Heaven, are the strongest Pledges Men can give of their Veracity, and the making these instrumental to the perverting of Justice, is an Iniquity that shakes the very Foundations of Government: It invades the Rights of our Neighbour, undermines the Power of the Prince, and affronts the Attributes of that God, *to whom Vengeance belongeth.*

THE prodigious Increase of the Number of those infamous Shops, which sell Spirituous Liquors, is too visible; where People may be cheaply Drunk, to the ruin of their own Constitutions, and those of their Posterity. *Drunkenness* is a very brutish and destructive Vice, even where the Liquors are best prepared,

ed, and most wholsome. Wine it self, as Solomon observes, *tho' it giveth its Colour in the Cup, tho' it moveth it self aright, yet at the last, biteth like a Serpent, and stings like an Adder*; but these inflaming Spirits extracted from the worst Ingredients, are a Poison that operate more swiftly to our Ruin. How far this in a Political View may affect the Safety of the Kingdom in our Seamen and Soldiers, who are much addicted to them, and perish more by them, than by the Sword or the Ocean, it becomes not me but the Legislature to consider.

ANOTHER great and apparent Offence now complained of, is the Profanation of the *Lord's Day*, especially by some, who publicly expose their Goods to Sale upon that Day; so that if they were not often brought before the Magistrate for their Offences, as they frequently have been for about three Years past, 'tis greatly to be fear'd, that many other Traders would keep open Shop also upon that Day. The Neglect of the Duties of this sacred Day, is one great Source of that Torrent of Iniquity which overspreads the Land: Condemn'd Criminals often confess, just before their Execution, that this was the Beginning of their vicious Life, and the first Occasion of bringing them into wicked Company; from which they proceeded from one degree of Vice to another, till they came to that unhappy End.

THE Sins of *Uncleanness*, notwithstanding the Vigilance of many worthy Justices of the Peace to suppress them, are still too triumphant;

phant ; abandon'd Prostitutes still take up their nightly Stations, to seduce unwary Youth, who follow them, *as a Bird hasteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life.* But who can without Horror think of those emerit Harlots, who having spent a great part of a miserable Life, in a Course of Lust and Wantonness, in their declining Years, take upon them the Office of the Devil, by tempting and soliciting others ? who stand ready to seize unsuspecting Innocents at their first Arrival, and under pretence of hiring them to honest Business, use all their Arts to betray them into Lewdness. Who at once despoil them of their Virtue, Health, and all the Comforts of this Life, and all the Happiness of another. Description cannot reach their Guilt, nor is any Punishment too severe for their Persons.

SINCE such Iniquities abound among us, how necessary is it for us, who are Watchmen, to *lift up our Voice like a Trumpet, to cry aloud, and spare not ; to shew the People their Transgressions,* and warn them of their Danger ? How necessary for the Magistrate to exert the Power he is intrusted with, to restrain the unruly, and punish the stubborn Offender ? And how prudent and commendable is the Zeal of those worthy Persons, who form themselves into *Societies* ; that with united Strength they may redress those Evils, which are got beyond the Power of single Persons ? that they may assist the Magistrate in the Discharge of his Duty, by strengthening his Power,

20 *A SERMON before the Societies*

and enlarging his Intelligence, that the good Laws, which the Wisdom of our Nation hath enacted, may be no longer a dead Letter, but put in vigorous Execution: That those, who are already guilty, may be reclaimed, if possible; or at least, that the Innocent may not be infected by the Contagion of their Examples. That all of us, in our several Stations, may with Chearfulness and Diligence set about this great and glorious Work, of *turning others to Righteousness*; give me leave,

Thirdly, JUST to lay before You two very considerable Encouragements, with which it is attended: The Excellency of the Employ; and the Greatness of the Reward.

CONSIDER the Excellency of the Employ.

FOR what, I beseech You, can be more excellent, than to lay out our Time, and employ our Care, in conducting Man, the noblest Part of this lower Creation, to the Regions of immortal Glory? To endeavour to bring the noblest Part of him, his Soul, (that Ray of celestial Light) to the clearest view of Truth, and the purest enjoyment of Felicity; *i. e.* to the utmost Perfection it is capable to arrive at? This, if any thing upon Earth is so, is indeed truly Glorious. "There is nothing greater
" in your Fortune, than to be *Able*, nothing
" better in your Nature, than to be *Willing*,
" to preserve Mankind," said the Eloquent Roman; when he spoke only of saving Men
from

from a Temporary Death. But if that was so glorious, with what Rhetorick and Colours would he have set off the infinitely more noble Task of saving Souls to Eternity? For, as the Apostle reasons in another Case, If the Preservation of this frail Body be glorious, *which Glory is to be done away*, how much rather is the Preservation of the Soul, which is to last to endless Ages? "The divinest Perfection" (says a Father) Mortals can boast of, is to "be Fellow-Workers with God, in recovering Souls again to his Favour." This is as it were doing the Work of Creation, in one of the noblest Branches of it, and recovering that *Image of God*, after which, Man was at first fram'd, and which by his Transgression he had ruined and defaced.

THE other Encouragment I mentioned, is what my Text proposes, and is indeed the Main of all: Which is, the exceeding Greatness of the Future Reward; *They that be Wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament: and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

It is hardly in the Power of Language, to give us a nobler and more lively Idea of the Greatness of that Recompence, which is reserv'd in a Future State for those, who with Zeal and Diligence, with Courage and Wisdom, promote the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind. Nor is it in the compass of Thought, to propose to us more weighty
Motives

22 *A SERMON before the Societies*

Motives to our Industry in that Work, than the Greatness of that Recompence. For all the Images, which this present Scene of Things can supply us with, *fall far short of the Glory that shall be revealed. Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, the Things which God hath laid up for those that love him.* Happy beyond Expression, and Glorious above Thought, and Secure beyond the Power of Time and Chance, will be *the Inheritance of all the Saints in Light.* But still, we are assur'd, there are *many Mansions* in our Father's House, and that there will be different Degrees of Glory in a Future State. That the highest Degree of Glory will belong to those who have taken most Pains, and gone thro' greatest Trials, in the Pursuit of the great Ends of their Creation, *the Glory of God, and the Good of Men.* That Charity, *i. e.* the Love of God and our Neighbour, will be the principal Qualification to recommend us to the Divine Favour, and what Good we have done or endeavour'd to do, under the Influence of an humble, but stedfast, Faith, will be the grand Article of Enquiry at the great Day; and according as we resolve that Question, will our future Station be assign'd. That Charity to the Souls of Men, is the greatest of all Charities, and the instructing them in their Duty, and recovering them from Sin and Destruction, the greatest Good we can possibly do them; the Work is worthy all our Care and Concern, the Reward worthy all our Endeavours
and

and Pains. And whatsoever worldly Profession we are of, this Employ will belong to us, and in Proportion to our Diligence in it, we shall be Sharers in the Reward.

WHAT a powerful Motive is this to all of us, in our several Stations, according to our several Capacities, to rectify the Errors, and correct the Vices of those we converse with; and to propagate Truth and Goodness wherever we are concern'd? To those of plentiful Fortunes, what an Engagement is it, to contribute generously of their Substance towards the Enlightning and Reforming the World; and by their uncertain Mammon, to purchase to themselves, a lasting and solid Inheritance?

AND what more noble Encouragement can I propose to You, who in these *Societies* are engaged in this glorious Cause, of promoting the Honour of God, and the Welfare of your Brethren, to persuade You to persevere unto the End, with Courage and Patience? May the Numbers of such *true* Patriots to their Country continually encrease, and may the blessed Work of *Reformation* go on with Success under your charitable Hands; nor should we be deterr'd at the odious Name which attends INFORMERS with *bad Designs*, from undertaking that Office, out of a *true generous Christian Principle*, of turning Sinners from the Error of their Ways. Undeserv'd Reproaches may be receiv'd with Pleasure, by those who profess themselves Disciples of a Master, who
for

24 *A SERMON before the Societies, &c.*

for the Salvation of Mankind, underwent the Shame and Scandal of the Cross; especially when *such light Afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.* By suffering others likewise to go on in their Wickedness, when 'tis in our Power to prevent it, we become Partakers of other Mens Sins: Nor should we be ashamed, when it concerns our Souls.

LET the Excellency of the Employ invite You; the Assistance of Heaven, and the Assurance of a good Conscience support You, and the exceeding great Rewards of a Future State, encourage You, under the greatest Difficulties, to render as many as possible Wise and Virtuous in the present Age, and Happy to all Eternity.

BY thus letting your *Light shine before Men, you will turn many to Righteousness on Earth, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven;* where You yourselves will hereafter shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever.

WHICH GOD of his infinite Mercy grant. To whom with the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now, and for ever.

F I N I S.



The FORTY-FIRST
ACCOUNT
OF THE
PROGRESS made in the
Cities of *London and Westminster,*
And Places adjacent,
By the *Societies* for Promoting
a Reformation of Manners ;

By furthering the Execution of the LAWS
against Profaneness and Immorality, and
by other Christian Methods.

THE Reasonableness of Uniting in So-
cieties, for the more effectual carrying
on a Work of this Nature, need not
be further proved, after what has been said
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with so much Advantage upon that Subjection the *Annual Reformation Sermons*; as also by the excellent Author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, who, in his Treatise of the *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, hath this remarkable Passage: *The Scandal*, saith he, *brought upon Religion, as it was not contracted by the Irregularities of one or two Persons, but by associated and common Crimes; so neither will it be removed by a few single and private Reformations. There must be Combinations and publick Confederacies in Virtue, to ballance and counterpoise those of Vice, or she will never recover that Honour which she acquir'd by the general Piety of her Professors.*

THANKS be to God, many such Combinations and publick Confederacies are now in Being, who make it a great Part of their Business to oppose associated, as well as particular Offenders.

THE *Societies for Reformation of Manners* are eminently of that Number: And the Usefulness of such Confederacies is visible from what has been actually brought about by means of the said Societies, far beyond what could have been hoped for from any private Endeavours. Multitudes, for these *Forty Years* last past, have been prosecuted, and punished according to Law, for lewd and scandalous Practices. Great Numbers of Bawdy-houses, Sodomitical Haunts, Common Gaming-houses, and other Disorderly Houses, have been suppressed and shut up; and the

the Streets very much purg'd from the wretched Tribe of *Night-walking Prostitutes* and most *detestable Sodomites*. Many young Men, taken with lewd Women, have, by their being brought to timely Shame and Punishment, been discouraged, and turned (as we have reason to hope) from following such sinful Courses, which often cause them to defraud their Parents, Masters, &c. and bring themselves to utter Ruin. Moreover, many Thousands of *good Books* have been dispersed by these *Societies* throughout the Kingdom, and put into the Hands of lewd and profane Persons, to awaken them to a Sense of their Sins. By these various Methods, many Persons have, by the Blessing of GOD, been brought to a Sense of their Sin and Danger; and tho' they have at first been exasperated against the Instruments of awakening them out of their dreadful Lethargy, and stopping them in their sinful Courses; yet have they afterwards blessed GOD for their Recovery, and been heartily thankful to those, who had been serviceable to them therein.

THIS Undertaking, begun by a very few Persons, has mightily spread it self, not only in *Great Britain*, but in Foreign Parts. And the great Good which, by GOD's Blessing, has been done by the said Societies, has very much animated their Endeavours. They likewise have been encouraged by several Royal Proclamations, Orders of Sessions, Presentments of

Grand-Juries in many Counties in *England*; by the Lord-Mayors and Court of Aldermen of the City of *London*; by many Sermons of the Right Reverend the Bishops, and other eminent Divines, preached to the Societies; and by the Writings of other learned Men; as also by the solemn Approbation of a considerable Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Honourable Judges of *England* and *Ireland*, and the Commissioners of several Protestant Churches.

It must be confessed, That Profaneness and Debauchery do very much abound, for Want of a more general and hearty Concurrence in this Work of Persons of all Orders amongst us, in Proportion to the Greatness of the Concern.

THE said Societies have prosecuted, and been assisting in Prosecuting, from the *First* of *December* 1734, to the *First* of *December* 1735, divers sorts of Offenders, viz.

For Lewd and Disorderly Practices	_____	318
Sabbath-Breakers	_____	268

Including 28 Butchers, indicted at *Hicks's* Hall for a Nuisance, in setting out Meat upon several Days, which being upon the Lord's Day, made it liable to the Complaint of the Society, and were fin'd.

THE Total Number of Persons prosecuted in or near *London* only, for *Debauchery* and *Pro-*

Profaneness, for Forty one Years last past, are calculated at about 99970.

THEY have also been assisting in bringing to Punishment several *Sodomitical Houses*, as well as divers Persons for *Sodomy*, and *Sodomitical Practices*, who have been prosecuted by the Direction, and at the Charge of the Government.

THOSE therefore that have a just Zeal for the Honour of GOD and Religion; who desire to prevent the spreading of the Leprosy of Sin; who are unwilling to have their Children and other Relations, or their Friends and Servants, corrupted by ill Examples and wicked Allurements: Those that sincerely wish well to those excellent and hopeful Nurseries of Piety and good Manners, the CHARITY SCHOOLS; and would be heartily grieved to see the Christian Instruction and pious Education that Children receive therein, miscarry, through prevailing open Temptations to Wickedness, and a general Contempt of Religion: Those, lastly, who have any due Love to their Country, and would prevent a National Guilt, and thereby keep off National Judgments, cannot possibly, one would think, but heartily approve and assist this useful Design for suppressing Profaneness and Immorality.

Now,

Now, Whereas some have most maliciously insinuated, That it is not *Reformation* which is intended, but the getting of Money from the Delinquents ; and by such base and vile Reports have imposed on some very well-meaning People : It is hereby declared to the World, That such a Charge upon these Societies is absolutely false. It is allowed, that there have been some base and wicked Persons (not engag'd, or in the least concerned in this Work) who have extorted Money from Offenders, and sometimes from honest Men. But all such Practices are utterly detested by these Societies, (who, it is well known, have strictly enquired after such Persons, and when discovered, have brought them to Punishment) nor do they know or believe that any who are engag'd with them are chargeable with such vile Practices. And to prevent as much as is possible, all Suspicion of a mercenary Design or Principle in any that act in the Business of *Reformation*, the GENTLEMEN concern'd have all along recommended and insisted upon it with their Friends, that those who give Information against *Vice* or *Profaneness*, should never receive that Part of the Penalty which the Law allows the Informer ; and it has not come to their Knowledge, that any such Person hath acted o-
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therwise. However, if at any Time hereafter it should happen, that any Person, or Persons, concern'd in this good Design, should be chargeable with any of the evil Practices before-mentioned, or even with taking the Reward which the Law allows them ; it is humbly requested of all that are heartily concerned for the Interest of Religion, that they will give Notice thereof to any of the said Societies.

N. B. *The Persons concerned in this Design, confine their Prosecutions to the Offences mention'd in this Account.*

AND for the further preventing any Objections from those who are too much dispos'd to raise them, against this necessary Work, that there is more Regard had to the Punishment, than to the Conversion of profane and vicious Persons; it may not be improper to acquaint the World: That in Conjunction with the other pious and proper Methods of Instruction, Admonition, and Reproof, the number of Books written and published for those and the like Ends, and given away at their own Charge, are calculated at above Four hundred and forty three Thousand four Hundred.

N. B.

N. B. It must ever be most thankfully acknowledged by all who wish well to Mankind, and the Prosperity of the Government, That the Justices of the Peace of the COMMITTEE appointed at the Sessions of the Peace for the City and Liberty of *Westminster*, for Suppressing of the *Night-Houses* and other *Disorderly Houses*, &c. have been very instrumental in Promoting this good Work, by Punishing as well the *Keepers* and *Maintainers* of a great Number of those sort of Houses, as also of many *Lewd* and *Disorderly Persons*.

F I N I S.

